

CONSTITUTION
of the
Independent Labor League of America

7th National Convention

New York City, July 2-3-4, 1938

ARTICLE I

NAME, PURPOSES, AND AFFILIATIONS

Section 1 - Name

The organization shall be known as the Independent Labor League of America.

Section 2 - Purposes and Objectives

The Independent Labor League strives to develop a powerful, class-conscious labor movement in this country and internationally. It stands for the principles of socialism and strives for the establishment of a workers and farmers government to bring about the replacement of the historically obsolete capitalist system by a socialist society. It forms part of the American labor movement, fighting for the immediate interests of the workers and working farmers on every front and striving to infuse socialist clarity and class consciousness into these struggles so as to develop them in the direction of a struggle for political power and the achievement of a socialist society.

Section 3 - International Affiliations

The Independent Labor League of America is affiliated with the International Communist Opposition (I.C.O.).

Thru the I.C.O. and directly, the Independent Labor League of America (I.L.L.A.) joins with other working-class organizations thruout the world in the struggle against war, imperialism, fascism and capitalism.

ARTICLE II

MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

Section 1 - Membership

A. Any person who accepts the program, purposes and constitution of the I.L.L.A. may, upon signing an application card so stating, become a member.

B. The application card shall contain the following pledge:

"I, the undersigned, hereby apply for membership in the Independent Labor League of America. I wish to help develop a powerful, class-conscious labor movement in this country. I wish to help in the struggle for the abolition of capitalism and for the establishment of a workers' socialist society. I pledge to work for the unity of the revolutionary working class forces of the world."

- C. Application for membership shall be made to, and approved by, a branch of the organization where such branch exists. Otherwise, application shall be made direct to the National Council (or the National Executive Committee).
- D. Every member is required to participate actively in the work of the organization, to pay his membership dues and assessments and to abide by its discipline.
- E. A member of the organization shall have membership rights in only one branch.

Section 2 - Rights and Duties of Members

- A. The I.L.L.A. is based on the system of democratic control and disciplined action:
 - (1) Full freedom of expression of opinion and of discussion of the policies of the organization is guaranteed to all members. Facilities for such discussion shall be provided by the proper committees.
 - (2) All decisions as to the policy and activities of the organization are made, and all policy-making and administrative committees are elected, by a majority vote of the membership in accordance with the regulations provided for in this Constitution.
 - (3) Once a decision is reached by the convention or by a committee endowed with power to make such a decision, it becomes binding upon every member of the organization in his activities. Committees and officers chosen in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution have full authority within their jurisdictions.
- B. Discipline is rooted, on the one hand, in the socialist consciousness of the membership and their confidence in the fundamental soundness of the principles and aims of the organization; and, on the other, in inner democracy, which guarantees every member full rights of participating in the formulation of policy and selection of leadership. Any infraction of the rules or decisions of the organization or any conduct bringing damage or discredit to the organization or the labor movement, shall meet with disciplinary action (censure, warning, suspension, expulsion), in accordance with the following rules:
 - (1) Branches, city, state or regional committees may discipline members within their jurisdictions. An appeal against such action may be made to the National Council (or the National Executive Committee). Orders of expulsion shall be referred to the National Council (N.C.) (or the National Executive Committee) (N.E.C.), for approval and shall not take effect until so approved.
 - (2) The N.C. (or the N.E.C.) may discipline members of the organization.
 - (3) In all cases, a full and fair hearing shall be held and the defendant given adequate facilities for presenting his case.

Written charges must be presented in advance to the branch or the division, and to the member.

(4) Appeals against any disciplinary action taken against a member may be made to the higher committees of the organization and to the National Convention.

Section 3 - Branches

Members shall be organized in branches on an industrial, factory, functional, regional, city or neighborhood basis, according to the needs of the situation. This shall be done under the direction or with the approval of the N.C. (or the N.E.C.), which may delegate this power to regional, state or city committees.

Section 4 - City, State and Regional Divisions

Where necessary, the N.C. (or the N.E.C.) shall set up city, state, regional or other divisions to embrace all branches within such jurisdictions. Divisional committees shall be set up by a delegate conference of branches. These committees shall have full powers in their divisions, subject to the approval of the N.C. (or the N.E.C.).

ARTICLE III

CONVENTION

Section 1 - Regular Conventions

National conventions of the organization shall be held biennially. The N.C. (or the N.E.C.) shall, at least three months in advance, fix the date of the convention and the city where it shall be held.

Section 2 - Special Conventions

Special conventions shall be called upon majority vote of the N.C. (or the N.E.C.). Special conventions shall also be called by the N.C. (or the N.E.C.) upon request of 25% of the branches of the organization, representing one-third of the membership of the organization in good standing.

Section 3 - Representation

- A. Representation to the convention shall be from the branches in proportion to membership. But each branch shall have at least one delegate.
- B. The membership of a branch shall be computed on the basis of the average number of good standing members during the four months preceding the call for the convention.
- C. Branches established within the four-month period preceding the call for the convention, but at least two months before the date of the convention period, shall be entitled to representation on the basis of the average number of good standing members during that period. Branches established within two months of the date of the convention shall be entitled to fraternal representation only.
- D. The N.C. (or N.E.C.) shall determine the basis of representation.

Section 4 - Postponement

The N.C. (or N.E.C.) may, by two-thirds vote, postpone the regular convention for a period of not more than four months after the scheduled date.

Section 5 - Types of Delegates

- A. Regular delegates are entitled to both voice and vote at the convention.
- B. Alternate delegates may be elected by the branches. These will be recognized as regular delegates in the absence of the duly elected regular delegates.
- C. Fraternal and alternate delegates are entitled to a voice but no vote at the convention.
- D. Members of the N.C., not elected as regular delegates, shall be seated as fraternal delegates at the convention.

Section 6 - Eligibility of Delegates

To be eligible as a delegate, a candidate must be in good standing at the time of election, and a member of the organization for at least one year. In case of branches established within a year before the convention, the N.C. (or N.E.C.) shall lay down rules of eligibility.

Section 7 - Discussion Period

- A. At least two months before the convention shall be set aside as a pre-convention discussion period, in which the program, policies, tactics and activities of the organization shall be open for organized discussion:
 - (1) A section of the press of the organization shall be set aside for discussion articles by members in good standing, unless inner-organization bulletins are provided for this purpose.
 - (2) Arrangements for discussion at branch meetings shall be made by the N.C. (or N.E.C.) in cooperation with the branch or regional committee.
 - (3) Resolutions, etc., for presentation to the convention, shall be made available to the branches and, as far as possible, be published in the press of the organization at least one month prior to the convention.
 - (4) Should varying viewpoints on questions before the convention be found in the N.C. (or N.E.C.), every minority shall have adequate facilities to present its standpoint in the pre-convention discussion and, by co-reporters at the convention itself.
 - (5) Any branch or division of the organization may submit resolutions or amendments not later than one month before the convention. Upon request of the branch, such resolutions or amendments must be submitted by the N.C. (or N.E.C.) to the branches of the organization.

B. Upon the decision of the N.C. (or N.E.C.), post-convention discussions may be arranged for the clarification or popularization of the decisions of the convention. Procedure for such discussions shall be decided by the N.C. (or N.E.C.).

Section 8 - Convention Procedure

A. The N.C. (or N.E.C.) shall appoint a Credentials Committee prior to the convention. This report shall be submitted to the convention for approval. The convention shall have full power in passing on the credentials of delegates.

B. The convention shall decide the procedure for its own sessions. Recommendations for convention procedure shall be submitted to the convention by the N.C. (or N.E.C.).

Section 9 - Powers of the Convention

The convention is the highest authority of the organization. Its decisions have binding power upon all members and all committees of the organization.

Section 10 - Divisional Conventions

With the approval of the N.C. (or N.E.C.), city, state, or regional conventions may be held. Rules and procedure for such divisional conventions shall be worked out by the divisional committees, subject to the approval of the N.C. (or N.E.C.).

ARTICLE IV

NATIONAL COUNCIL AND NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1 - National Council

A. A National Council shall be elected by the convention. The number of members of the National Council shall be decided by the convention.

B. To be eligible for election to the National Council, a member must have belonged to the organization for two years prior to the convention and be in good standing.

C. The National Council shall meet at least twice a year.

D. The National Council shall have full power to decide policies for the organization and otherwise administer its affairs, within the bounds of this constitution and the decisions of the convention.

Section 2 - National Executive Committee

A. The National Council shall select from its members, a National Executive Committee of not more than fifteen members.

B. The National Executive Committee shall have the full powers of the National Council in between meetings of the National Council. The National Executive Committee shall be responsible and subordinate to the National Council.

C. The National Executive Committee shall meet as frequently as necessary but at least once in two weeks.

Section 3 - Officers and Committees

- A. The N.C. shall select a National Secretary who shall be chairman of the N.C. and of the N.E.C. He shall be charged with the current administrative and executive duties of the organization, subject to the N.C. (or N.E.C.).
- B. The N.C. (or N.E.C.) shall appoint whatever officers or committees it may find necessary.

ARTICLE V

DUES AND FINANCES

Section 1 - Rates of Dues

- A. The N.C. (or N.E.C.) shall set up a schedule of dues-payments based on the principle of payment in proportion to earnings.
- B. Special rates shall be fixed for unemployed members during the period of their unemployment.

Section 2 - Payment of Dues

Dues shall be paid to the branch. Members of the organization who are not members of branches shall pay their dues directly to the National Office.

Section 3 - Apportionment of Dues

- A. Of the dues paid to the branch, one-third shall be retained by the branch and two-thirds transmitted to the National Office. Remittance to the National Office shall be made at least once a month.
- B. Divisional committees may, with the approval of the N.C. (or N.E.C.) retain a portion of the share of the dues remaining with the branches in their jurisdictions. The proportion of division between branch and divisional committee shall be decided by the latter with the approval of the N.C. (or N.E.C.).

Section 4 - Initiation Fee

With his or her application for membership, each applicant shall pay an initiation fee of 50¢, which shall be transmitted entirely to the National Office. Unemployed shall pay an initiation fee of 10¢ which shall be transmitted entirely to the National Office.

Section 5 - Change of Membership Books

- A. Membership books shall be changed every year at the beginning of the year.
- B. New books shall be given to members only if all dues and assessments of the previous year have been completely paid up.
- C. A fee of 10¢ shall be paid for every new book, which shall be transmitted entirely to the National Office.

Section 6 - International Solidarity Fund

- A. For the purpose of aiding the proletarian struggle in other countries a monthly sum shall be paid to the National Office by each member thru his branch.
- B. The size of this payment shall be determined by the N.C. (or N.E.C.) on the principle of payment in proportion to earnings. Unemployed shall pay at a special rate during the period of their unemployment.
- C. The N.C. (or N.E.C.) shall decide on the distribution of the International Solidarity Fund.

Section 7 - Special Assessments

The N.C. (or N.E.C.) may, by a two-thirds vote, levy special assessments upon the members.

Section 8 - Control of Accounts and Reports

- A. The N.C. (or N.E.C.) shall appoint a Controller of Accounts of the National Office. No member shall be eligible for this office unless he has been a member of the organization for at least two years and is in good standing.
- B. Complete and regular monthly financial reports shall be submitted by each branch and divisional committee to the Controller of Accounts of the National Office.
- C. The Controller of Accounts of the National Office shall keep regular supervision over the income and expenditures of the organization in all of its sections, shall submit regular reports to the N.C. (or N.E.C.), shall prepare financial statements for the N.C. (or N.E.C.) and for the convention.

Section 9 - Good Standing and Arrears

- A. To be in good standing, a member must be in arrears not more than two months in dues payments and payments to the International Solidarity Fund, and shall have paid up all assessments within the time specified in the decision establishing such assessments. Any member not in good standing may be deprived of the rights and privileges of membership.
- B. A member who is more than six months in arrears in his or her dues payments or payments to the International Solidarity Fund, shall be dropped from membership by the branch of which he or she is a member. Notice shall be given to the member before such action. Upon the payment of the arrears, such members may be reinstated by the decision of his or her branch, or by the decision of the divisional committee or the N.C. (or N.E.C.).
- C. Any branch which is more than six months in arrears in its payments to the National Office shall, after due notice, be stricken from the rolls of the organization by the N.C. (or N.E.C.). Any branch stricken from the rolls shall transmit to the National Office all its monies, papers, and other assets. Upon payment of its arrears, such branch may be restored to the rolls of the organization by decision of the N.C. (or N.E.C.).

ARTICLE VI

YOUTH BRANCHES AND YOUTH SECTION

Section 1 - Youth Branches

- A. For the purpose of advancing the program and aims of the Independent Labor League of America among young people, youth branches shall be established by the divisional committees ~~or~~ by the N.C. (or N.E.C.).
- B. Membership in these youth branches shall be limited to young people between the ages of 14 and 25.
- C. The youth branches shall be regular branches of the organization, with all duties, rights and privileges appertaining to such branches. They shall carry on their activities in forms and by methods appropriate to their character and in conformity with their special purpose as youth branches.
- D. Members of the youth branches shall be regular members of the organization with the duties, rights and privileges as such.

Section 2 - Youth Conferences and Youth Section

- A. The totality of youth branches shall constitute the Youth Section of the I.L.L.A.
- B. The N.C. (or N.E.C.) shall, from time to time, particularly at conventions of the organization, convene delegate conferences of youth branches.
- C. The conference of youth branches shall, subject to the approval of the N.C. (or N.E.C.), elect a National Youth Committee to coordinate the activities of the youth branches among young people. The Youth Committee shall be subordinate to the N.C. (or N.E.C.).
- D. The National Youth Committee shall send one of its members to every session of the National Council, who shall be seated as a fraternal representative. The N.C. (or N.E.C.) shall choose one of its members to become a regular member of the National Youth Committee.
- E. Divisional youth conferences shall be held where necessary under the direction of the divisional committee with the approval of the N.C. (or N.E.C.).

ARTICLE VII

AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Section 1 - Amendment by Convention

This constitution may be amended by a majority vote of a regular or special convention of the organization, provided that for this purpose there is a quorum of two-thirds of the regularly accredited delegates to such convention.

Section 2 - Amendment by Referendum of Branches

- A. This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the National Council, approved by at least two-thirds of the branches embracing at least one-half of the membership.
- B. The N.C. (or N.E.C.) shall conduct the referendum of the branches.

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Submitted to the 7th National Convention, July 4, 1938.